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ORATION,

SPOKEN BEFORE

"THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY, FOR THE PROMOTION OF FREEDOM AND THE RELIEF OF PERSONS UNLAWFULLY HELDEN IN BONDAGE."

CONTAINED IN

HARTFORD,

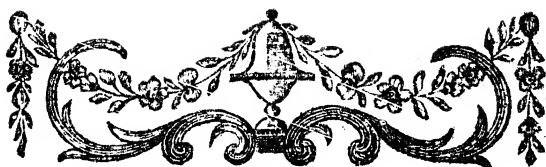
On the 8th day of MAY, A. D. 1794.

BY THEODORE DWIGHT, ESQUIRE.



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AN O R A T I O N.

IF this assembly were convened, for the purpose of listening to a dissertation on the general subjects of freedom and slavery, the fact would appear singular, in the view of a stranger. For certainly, a nation, which has led the rest of the world to the consideration of these most interesting topics, and fully disclosed the nature of the latter, ought to furnish no employment for the advocate of the former. And if any thing can sound like a solecism in the ears of mankind, it will be this story—That in the United States of America, societies are formed for the promotion of freedom. Will not the enquiry instantly be made—“Are the United States of America not free? Possessed of the best country, the wisest government, and the most virtuous inhabitants, on the face of the earth; are they still enslaved?” No—America is not enslaved; she is free. Her country is still excellent, her government wise, and her inhabitants virtuous. But this reply must be mixed with one base ingredient. The slavery of negroes is still suffered to exist. The answer being given, the astonishment will imme-

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diately cease, and the enquiry become cool and spiritless. Whether negroes are enslaved, or free; miserable, or happy; are questions not interesting to their whiter masters. Placed by Providence in a more fortunate situation, and impelled by that love of domination, which is inherent in man, they become much more active in securing the subjects of their tyranny, than in the extension of human happiness. Nor is this all. Such is the depravity of our nature and the force of habit, that Reason is too often called in to aid the dictates of Passion, and sanction the cruelties of Tyranny.

THE existence of African slavery then even in the state of Connecticut, being a fact which admits not of contradiction, the propriety of Institutions like that, which has brought this audience together, will sufficiently appear. Nor will the frequent recurrence of this meeting, in the smallest degree lessen the importance of its duty. For tho' to the ear of cold and nerveless Apathy, the frequent detail of iniquities steadily committed, and of duties too often neglected, may be a tedious and painful task; yet the benevolent heart can never be uninterested, when listening to a rehearsal of the wretchedness of man, or when contemplating the prospect of his encreasing felicity.

THERE is not a point of view, in which African slavery has not been considered by men of the first talents for research, for detail, and for description. The labours of the poet, the historian, the legislator, and the divine, have often presented the subject in the strongest, and most odious colours. Still the evil exists; and Interest

alone has been able to withstand the united force of imagination, of eloquence, of truth, and of religion. I say Interest alone ; for I will venture to assert, that when it shall cease to be for the interest of mankind, to torture their fellow creatures in this wicked commerce, not one solitary individual will be found trafficking in human flesh. Those commands of the Deity, which are now impiously appealed to, as a sanction for barbarity and murder, will then be passed by unregarded ; and these defenceless objects of cruelty, will be left in the quiet enjoyment of their native simplicity, innocence, and happiness. Where is the zealous apostle of truth, who, believing it to be the will of the compassionate God, that every being, among his creatures, who wears a sable complexion, should be reduced to the most abject servitude, would risque his property, his health, and his life, on a tedious and dangerous voyage, merely to fulfil the decrees of Heaven. It is presumed, that such an instance cannot be found, among the sons of men. And those persons who justify slavery by the permission, or command of God, must believe that the omniscient Jehovah paid but a slender regard to a part of his will, which is opposed by every emotion of generosity, compassion and sensibility, when he submitted the chance of its propagation, to the uncertain management of human interest.

PERSUADED that Interest then is the only support of a practice so wicked, so detestable, and so destructive in its effects on the human mind, I shall be pardoned for the manifestation, at least of earnestness, in the following desultory remarks, on some of the reasons, urged against

the total abolition of slavery, in the state of Connecticut. These remarks may perhaps be interspersed, or succeeded by others, in some measure descriptive of its nature, and of its effects on the human mind.

WITHIN a few years past, the subject of slavery has been repeatedly discussed, in the legislature of this state, with great force of reasoning, and eloquence. The injustice of it has been generally, if not uniformly acknowledged; and the practice of it severely reprobated. But, when the question of total abolition has been seriously put, it has met with steady opposition, and has hitherto miscarried, on the ground of political expediency—That is, it is confessed to be *morally wrong*, to subject any class of our fellow-creatures to the evils of slavery; but asserted to be *politically right*, to keep them in such subjection. Without attending to this strange, and unfounded doctrine, in itself, I will consider some of the arguments, used in support of that political rectitude.

It is said, that the slavery of negroes was introduced *by our ancestors*—who, are acknowledged to have been generally humane and pious, and yet never questioned its rectitude; from them it *descended to us*; therefore, as *we inherit* the evil, we are at liberty to extricate ourselves from it *by degrees*; and are not bound to do it *immediately*. In support of this doctrine, we are told—that, tho' *the blacks* have a claim to justice, *the whites* have also a claim; that by doing *strict justice* to them, we shall do *injustice* to ourselves; and that we ought not to consult the interests of *one part of the community*, at the expense of *another*.

It being then acknowledged, that the enslaving of Africans was wrong in the first instance, it must necessarily follow, that the continuance of it is wrong : for a continued succession of unjust actions, can never gain the pure character of justice. If it was originally wrong, it has never ceased to be wrong for a moment since ; and length of time, instead of sanctioning, aggravates the transgression. This mode of reasoning is uniformly adopted by courts of justice, when deciding on questions of property, by the rules of municipal law. No tribunal ever admitted a plea of injustice on the part of a father, in vindication of his son, to whom the fruits of his illegal, or wicked conduct had descended. So far is this from the fact, that every person, found guilty of withholding strict justice from his neighbour, on such a frivolous pretence, is forced by the laws of his country to compensate the person injured, for every moment, during which the claim remains unanswered. And certainly, the moral law enjoins a very different doctrine from that, against which I am contending. “ I the Lord, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers, upon the children ” — is the strong, and unequivocal language of the decalogue. And if any man should deny substantial right to another, for the reasons which I have mentioned, the voice of common sense, as well as of law, would justify his creditor in casting him into prison, until he should pay the uttermost farthing. And what is the real ground of this difference, in the administration of justice, between white men, and negroes ? Simply this — the white men can appeal to the laws of their country, and enforce their rights. The negroes whom our fathers, and ourselves have enslaved,

have no tribunal to listen to their complaints, or to redress their injuries. Forced from their country, their friends, and their families, they are dragged to the sufferance of slavery, of torture, and of death, with no eye, and no arm, but the eye and arm of God, to pity, and to punish their wrongs. Society recognizes their existence, only for the purposes of injustice, oppression, and punishment.

By doing strict justice to the negroes, I presume is meant, totally to abolish slavery, and place them on the same ground, with free white men. The injustice, which, it is contended, will proceed from the immediate accomplishment of this end, in the first place respects the property of the persons, who hold slaves. It is said, that they were purchased under the sanction of the laws of the country; and therefore, arbitrarily to deprive the owners of such property, without any retribution, would be injustice. This is combining two questions, which have no relation to each other. The right of the slave to liberty, is a distinct consideration, from the right of the master to a compensation for the loss of his slave. Nor will the act of government, in granting freedom to the slave, weaken the master's claim for that compensation; but if it is just, at the time when the slave is set at liberty, it will forever remain just until it is satisfied. Emancipating the slave, then, subjects the master to no disadvantage, in obtaining from government the value of the slave; and therefore holding the slave in bondage, until compensation is made to the master, is clearly unjust.

BUT this question must be considered on very different ground. "The rights of persons," says a sensible writer on the laws of England, "considered in their natural capacities, are of two sorts, absolute, and relative. By the absolute rights of mankind, we mean those, which are so in their primary, and strictest sense; such as would belong to their persons merely in a state of nature, and which every man is entitled to enjoy, whether out of society, or in it. And these may be reduced to three principal, or primary articles; the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property."* No person, who hears me, will deny the justice, or reasonableness of this doctrine. Considering it, then, as acknowledged, it is evident, that the right of private property, standing in a station, subordinate to the right of personal security, and the right of personal liberty, merits an inferior consideration. Therefore, previously to discussing, and establishing the right of private property, the rights of personal security, and personal liberty, must be discussed, and established. If this reasoning be just, it is impossible, in any situation, or under the authority of any laws, to acquire a property in a human being. For it cannot be acquired, without a violation of rights, to which he has a prior, and absolute claim; and which are of inconceivably greater importance. The result, then, must necessarily be, that, in abolishing African slavery, no injury is done to private property.

BUT granting, for the moment, that proper-

* Blackstone's Commentaries.

ty can be gained in the body and mind of man ; a concession which can scarcely be made, for the sake of argument, without horror ; I deny, that any such property ever was gained, in this state, under the sanction of law. Search the statute books of Connecticut, from the date of its Charter to the present moment, and tell me where is the law which establishes such an inhuman privilege ? Happily for the honour of the state, those books were never stained with so black a statute. But it will be replied, that slavery is sanctioned by Prescription, and implicitly allowed by the laws of the land. “ To make a particular Custom good,” says the accomplished jurisprudent, from whom I have already quoted, “ the following are necessary requisites—That it have been used so long, that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. So that if any one can shew the beginning of it, it is no good custom.” It would not be a difficult task, to discover the beginning of the Custom under consideration. “ It must have been continued. Which must be understood of the right ; for if the right be any how discontinued for a day, the Custom is quite at an end.”—The right of the Custom of slavery, is given up by much the greater part of the community. “ It must have been peaceable—It must be reasonable.” Surely no man will contend that this Custom is either peaceable, or reasonable. The reason of man rises in uniform opposition to it ; and it is marked in every stage with war, barbarity, and murder.

BUT if this Prescription, or Custom, when tried by the rules of the English common law, would stand the test, still I contend, that no prescriptive right, can infringe the absolute rights of

mankind. These, especially personal security, and personal liberty, cannot be violated but by the positive laws of society. Such laws, I have already remarked, do not exist, in the code of Connecticut. But in that code there does exist a law, which speaks emphatically the opposite language. "No man's person shall be arrested, restrained, or any ways punished—No man shall be deprived of his wife, or children—No man's goods or estate shall be taken away from him, nor any ways indamaged, under colour of the law, or countenance of authority, unless clearly warranted by the laws of this state." Are not negroes men? Are they not arrested, restrained, and punished? Are they not deprived of their wives, and children? Are not their goods and estate taken from them, and endamaged, under colour of law, and countenance of authority alone? For the Custom, so often mentioned, can have no force, if there is a positive statute authorizing African slavery; and if there is no such statute, African slavery must owe its existence, solely to the countenance of authority.

BUT to make a still stronger concession, in favour of the friends of slavery than those already made, viz. That the absolute rights of individuals *are* subject to violation, under the authority of Custom, and that such Custom, having obtained, *is* clearly warranted by the laws of this state, yet I venture to assert, that no Custom and no Law, which a state where slavery is practised, either has made, or can make, ought to affect the enslaved negroes at all, unless designed as a partial compensation for the injuries which they have suffered—injuries, for which all the wealth of man can never atone. The right of society to make

laws of any description, depends entirely on the original compact, which formed the society. This compact, must have the real, or implied assent of every person, who is to be bound by the regulations of the society. Every person, then, who is forced to submit to the laws, and institutions of society, has a right to be heard, either in person, or by his representative, when those laws and institutions are framed ; and every person, who is forced to submit to such laws and institutions, without the opportunity of being thus heard, is forced to submit to the hard, and oppressive hand of Tyranny. Slaves then, having never really, nor impliedly agreed to any social compact, and never being heard, either personally, or representatively in the legislature, form no part of the social body ; and therefore cannot justly be the object of laws, except in the case I have already instanced. On the contrary, so far from uniting voluntarily with societies, in this country, they are bro't into them by force, and by force subjected to the laws, and regulations of powers, which they never acknowledged, and to which they owe neither obedience, nor gratitude. Being thus forced into a state of hostility, if defensive war is susceptible of justification, in any possible instance, this is that instance. Their lives, their property, their liberty, their happiness, are perpetually exposed to the inroads of every merciless invader. And tho', as the finishing stroke to their systems of guilt, societies think fit to punish those acts in slaves, which indeed in their own members, would be both civil and moral evils ; yet, probably on the strength of reasoning similar to that which I have adopted, an elegant English writer, pronounces it " impossible for a slave, to be guilty of a civil crime." The same law,

which justifies the enormities, committed by civilized nations, when engaged in war, will justify slaves for every necessary act of defence, against the wicked, and unprovoked outrages, committed against their peace, freedom, and existence.

BUT this question of expediency, is entitled to a still further consideration. It is said by the opposers of abolition, that the slaves are happier with their masters, than they could be, if possessed of freedom. Who is it that decides for them? Have the slaves been asked the question? Shall the man, whose heart rejoices in the opportunity of tyrannizing over the happiness of an abject wretch, whom force has subjected to his domination, prescribe enjoyments for that wretch? Let the inestimable jewel of freedom, be held out to their acceptance by the hand of legislation, and with it some shadow of compensation for their indescribable sufferings, and then, if they refuse it, let them serve their masters forever. But, until that has been done, let decency forbid the mouth of the savage, to utter the shameful falsehood.

PERHAPS the strain, in which I have spoken, may be censured, as dangerous to the peace of society. But if I have spoken the words of truth and soberness, I will risque the charge. Few men love their country with a more sincere, and ardent affection, than myself. Dear as it is to me, I am more solicitous for its justice, than for its peace. But when justice can be rendered, without disturbing the public tranquillity, it becomes a duty of the most pre-emptory and indispensable nature.

IN surveying the history of those countries, where domestic slavery has been carried to its greatest length, the mind is forcibly impressed with its detestable consequences on the human character. One of the most obvious, is a disposition to cruelty and injustice. Children are trained up from the cradle, in habits of punishment and revenge. Unrestrained, by their parents, from an implicit obedience to the dictates of passion, they regard slaves only as objects of convenience, oppression, and torture ; and often embrue their infant hands in the blood of Innocence. Under the influence of such an education, they advance in life, improving in the most inhuman, and destructive qualities. For the most trifling offence, and frequently for the sake of amusement, the slave is doomed to the sufferance of the most ingenious barbarity. And when grown to adult years, with a mind as debased as cruel, the imperious, and unprincipled master, satiates his brutal passion on violated chastity. And when the offspring of his guilty embraces, opens its eyes on the light of the sun, instead of the protection, the support, and the affection of a father, it experiences the injustice, the barbarity, and the vengeance of a tyrant. Nay, masters procreate the slaves, which not only perform every menial, and degrading office for them, but often are sold by them in market, like the beasts of the field. And however shocking it may sound to our ears, the instances are doubtless too frequent, in which the innocent offspring of the master and servant, not only becomes the slave of her unnatural brother, but is also forced to submit to his horrid, and incestuous passion.

ANOTHER consequence of slavery, is a spirit of domination. For proof of this, we may apply to those parts of the United States, where slavery is most extensively practised. In the four southern states, there exists the strongest spirit of aristocracy to be found in the union. This assertion I dare to make, in defiance of all the clamour, which can be raised to contradict it. Where is that spirit of republicanism, equality, freedom, and enmity to tyranny, of which they so arrogantly boast? Believe me, they exist but in sound. Domestic despotism rides triumphantly over the liberties, and happiness of thousands of our fellow-creatures, in each of those pretended republics. In no other country on earth, is slavery carried to such a length of oppression. Not contented with the common round of cruelty and wickedness, the masters there mock their slaves with the name of privileges, which they never enjoy; and thus force them to contribute to the strengthening of the powers, which hold them in bondage. Enjoying no rank in the community, and possessing no voice, either in elections, or legislation, the slaves are bro't into existence, in the Constitution of the United States, merely to afford opportunity for a few more of their masters, to tyrannize over their liberties. And no event could fill these states with such alarming apprehensions, as the erection of the standard of Freedom among their enslaved subjects. Therefore, before they upbraid the citizens of the northern states, with an attachment to the principles of aristocracy, or monarchy, let them begin the equal communication of those privileges, which *in theory*, they confess to be the birth right of man. Let them visit New-England, and learn the rudi-

ments of freedom. Here they will find, at least in some places, and God grant I may speedily say in all, that instead of the awful distance between the master and the slave, each inhabitant is as independent as the insolent planter—That here,

- “ Tho’ poor the peasant’s hut, his feast tho’ small,
- “ He sees his little lot the lot of all ;
- “ Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
- “ To shame the meanness of his humble shed ;
- “ No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
- “ To make him loath his healthful, homely meal ;
- “ But calm, and bred in innocence and toil,
- “ Each with contracting fits him to the soil.
- “ Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
- “ Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes.
- “ At night returning, every labour sped,
- “ He fits him down the monarch of a shed,
- “ Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
- “ His children’s looks, which brighten at the blaze.”*

ON the whole, every species of wickedness results from slavery, wherever it exists. The inhabitants, in the common course of events, become licentious in the commission of every immorality. All the honest, and virtuous employments of life, falling to the share of the slaves, the master naturally avoids them as unworthy of his dignity, and plunges into habits of indolence, and vice, equally destructive, and disgraceful to society. Even the females, forgetting those amiable, and endearing qualities, which bend the fiercer nature of man to gentleness and love, indulge themselves in paroxysms of rage ; and under the influence of the most ferocious passions, seize the engines of torture,

* Goldsmith.

and with all their feeble force, inflict on their unhappy servants the keenest misery. See a picture, drawn by one of the most humane and ingenious of her sex.

- " Lo ! where reclin'd, pale Beauty courts the breeze,
 " Diffus'd on sofas of voluptuous ease,
 " With anxious awe, her menial train around,
 " Catch her faint whispers of unutter'd sound.
 " See her in monstrous fellowship unite
 " At once the Scythian, and the Sybarite ;
 " Blending repugnant vices, misallied,
 " Which frugal nature purpos'd to divide.
 " See her with indolence, to fierceness join'd,
 " Of body delicate, infirm of mind,
 " With languid tones imperious mandates urge,
 " With arm recumbent wield the household scourge,
 " And with unruffled mien, and placid sounds,
 " Contriving torture, and inflicting wounds."*

AT the present period, when the principles of liberty are so highly revered, and the practice of them so justly admired, every question, in which they are involved, ought to be discussed by the soundest reason, and established on the most substantial justice. For when the persons interested in the event of such discussion, are of sufficient force to be formidable, those who are hardy enough to withhold their unalienable rights, will find themselves plunged in a deluge of calamity. Every instance on historical record, and every example before our eyes, abundantly teaches this solemn truth. Without wasting time in multiplying cases, I will only resort to one of the latter description. The situation of France, and some of her most important

* Mrs. Barbauld.

colonies, affords a melancholy proof, that a deviation from the path of reason and justice, in the pursuit of freedom, is necessarily attended, with the most distressing evils. When the councils of the nation were guided by discretion and integrity, the surrounding world beheld with admiration and applause, a stupendous object in the great system of Providence—one of the most numerous and mighty nations, on the earth, led by the hand of Reason alone to the acquisition of freedom and happiness. But when the government was seized by a profligate, and blood-thirsty junto, which, for a period, forced the infatuated republic to assassination and ruin,

“ Then fell the flower of Gallia, mighty names,
 “ Her hoary senators, and gasping patriots.
 “ The Mountain spake, and their licentious band
 “ Of blood-train’d ministry were loos’d to ruin.
 “ Invention wanton’d in the toil of infants
 “ Stabb’d on the breast, or reeking on the points
 “ Of sportive javelins. Husbands, sons and fires,
 “ With dying ears drank in the loud despair
 “ Of shrieking Chastity. The waste of war,
 “ Was peace and friendship to their civil massacres.”*

FROM France, turn your attention to the island of St. Domingo. A succession of unjust, and contradictory measures, in both the national and colonial governments, at length highly exasperated the negroes, and roused their spirits to unanimity and fanaticism. Seized by the phrenzy of oppressed human nature, they suddenly awoke from the lethargy of slavery, attacked their tyrannical masters, spread desolation and blood over the face of the colony, and by a series of vigorous efforts, established themselves on

the firm pillars of freedom and independence. Driven from their houses and possessions, by new and exulting masters, the domestic tyrants of that island wander over the face of the earth, dependent on the uncertain hand of Charity for shelter, and for bread. To the honour of Americans, it is true, that in this country, they have realized the most liberal humanity. But by a dispensation of Providence which Humanity must applaud, they are forced to exhibit, in the most convincing manner, this important truth—that despotism and cruelty, whether in the family, or the nation, can never resist the energy of enraged and oppressed man, struggling for freedom.

THESE evils may perhaps appear distant from us ; yet to some of our sister states they are probably nigh, even at the doors. Ideas of liberty and slavery, have taken such strong hold of the negroes, that unless their situation is suddenly ameliorated, the inhabitants of the southern states, will have the utmost reason to dread the effects of insurrection. And with the example of the West-Indies before their eyes, they will be worse than mad, if they do not adopt effectual measures to escape their danger. To oppose the slaves by force when in a state of rebellion, or to hold them in their present condition, for any considerable length of time in future, will be beyond their strength. Courage and discipline, form but a feeble front, to check the onset of freedom.

“ For what are fifty, what a thousand slaves,

“ Match’d to the finew of a single arm

“ That strikes for liberty ?”*

And when hostilities are commenced, where shall they look for auxiliaries, in such an iniquitous

warfare? Surely, no friend to freedom and justice will dare to lend them his aid. In a case, not essentially different in principle from the one under consideration, except its being less aggravated, the God of Heaven has uttered the following denunciation. “Therefore thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his neighbour, and every man to his brother: Behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine. And I will make you to be removed into all the face of the earth. And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them, which seek their life. And their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.”* Nor can the threatenings in this passage be avoided, under the idea, that it is a prophecy, remote, and uninteresting to us. It contains nothing more than the natural, and necessary consequences of slavery, in every country, where the slaves are more numerous than their masters. Indeed the prophecy has been most minutely fulfilled in the island already mentioned.

IN this state indeed, and with the sincerest pleasure I make the remark, in consequence of the small number of slaves, the advancement of civilization, and the diffusion of a liberal policy, the situation of the negroes is essentially different. Exposed to few severe punishments, and indulged in many amusements, compared with what is found in most other countries, they are here flourishing, and happy. But even here they are slaves. The very idea embitters every enjoy-

* Jeremiah, Chap. xxxiv. 17, 20.

ment. So necessary is freedom to happiness, that the mind, well informed of its nature, and acquainted with its blessings, if subjected to the will of an arbitrary and cruel master, would be wretched and solitary, altho' surrounded by all the pleasures of the garden of God. But as slaves do in fact exist in Connecticut, the inhabitants of the state, as it respects this great subject, must be divided into two classes—those, who justify slavery in the abstract—and those, who condemn it. And this general division will be found to comprehend every intermediate stage of character. For tho' the number of persons is small, who will avowedly advocate the principles of slavery; yet such persons do not only exist, but have the hardihood to appeal for arguments to support their barbarous sentiments, to the fountain of our holy religion, which breathes nought but peace and good will to man. But there is another more specious description of persons, which I class among the enemies of the freedom and happiness of mankind. These persons professedly acknowledge the wickedness of slavery, and still, on the pretence of political expediency, use every artifice of ingenuity and fraud, to rivet the fetters, which bind their fellow creatures in bondage. Such persons, deaf to the voice of Reason, and the supplications of Humanity, bend every object to the advancement of their wealth, and the gratification of their ambition; while the groans of dying Innocence, the screams of violated Chastity, and the ravings of tortured Maniacs, would sleep on their ears like the gentle musick of the passing gale. To such persons, as well as to those of the second class, which I have mentioned, a few enslaved, wretched beings, appeal for the blessings of free-

dom. On the part of the slaves, it is a question of right ; and on that of the state, a question of justice—a question, which cannot be suppressed by the strong pleadings of Avarice, nor hidden in the subterfuges of Sophistry. The first of these spirits is not more opposed to humanity, than the latter is to integrity. Sophistry may at times assist the advocate at the bar, when espousing the cause of iniquity ; but in a legislator it must ever be infamous, and the conscience of an honest man will never submit to its imposition. Nor should motives of ambition be suffered to operate, to the destruction of human happiness. It is a possession of too much value, to be held by so frail a tenure. Depraved indeed must be the heart of that man, who will swerve from the rigid rules of justice and duty, to aid his ambitious projects. Equally depraved, and if possible more execrable, is the unfeeling savage, who will lengthen out the misery of a fellow being with a smile of sarcastic pleasure on his fraudulent countenance. In the hour of distress and apprehension, gloomy and bitter must be the reflections of such a mind. But to the mind animated with a love of justice, and glowing with the purest benevolence, the valley of the shadow of death, will open a peaceful passage to the presence of his God.

If the arguments which I have used, as well as innumerable others which are constantly urged in opposition to slavery, cannot be fully answered and refuted, may it not be hoped, that this relique of oppression, so odious and so wicked, will be speedily extirpated in the state of Connecticut. Why should a countenance in this happy land, be saddened with the melancholy evil !

Can it be urged as a reason for its continuance, that the slaves, not being numerous enough to become troublesome, are unworthy of the public attention? A regard to the happiness of beings, occupying but a point in his dominions, destitute even of the claim of justice, and dependent on his will for existence, induced the Son of the living God to exchange the bosom of his Father, for a cruel, and ignominious death. And shall we refuse so slightly to imitate this illustrious example? The slaves are sufficiently numerous, and sufficiently important, to be highly injured, by being stripped of the only blessing, which can render life worth enjoying. For where is the being, who would not rather yield up his life a sacrifice, than part with his freedom? The wretch, if such an one can be found, is unworthy of the name of man.

WHO then can charge the negroes with injustice, or cruelty, when "they rise in all the vigour of insulted nature," and avenge their wrongs? What American will not admire their exertions, to accomplish their own deliverance? Every friend to justice and freedom, while his heart bleeds at the recital of the devastation and slaughter, which necessarily attend such convulsions of liberty, must thank his God for the emancipation of every individual from the miseries of slavery. This is the language of freedom; but it is also the language of truth—a language which ever grates on the ears of tyrants, whether placed at the head of a plantation, or the head of an empire. Every description of them, sooner than be deprived of domination—

"Would rather see
 "This earth a desert, desolate, and wild,
 "And like a lion stalk his lonely round,
 "Famish'd, and roaring for his prey."*

But this spirit, has neither charms to allure, nor terrors to awe the inhabitants of America. Having resisted it in the full vigour of manhood, they will disdain to yield to it in the imbecility of infancy. And indeed, submission would not only be deeply degrading, but extremely dangerous—dangerous, not to liberty alone, but to security and peace. Those tender plants can never flourish, on the bleak and barren soil of Slavery. For the same principles, which lead nations to the attainment of freedom, urge individuals to pursue the same important object; and the struggles of the latter, are as often marked with desperation, as the efforts of the former. Indeed, from individuals, the spirit is generally communicated to states, and from states to nations. And since the mighty, and majestic course of Freedom has begun, nothing but the arm of Omnipotence can prevent it from reaching to the miserable Africans. But let the domestic tyrants of the earth, tremble at the approaches of such a destructive enemy. For should they even attempt to oppose it, either by stratagem or force—

- “ Devouring War, shall wake his bloody band
- “ At Freedom’s call, and scourge their guilty land.
- “ And while his thundering chariot rolls along,
- “ And scatters discord o’er the fated throng,
- “ Death in the van, with Anger, Hate, and Fear,
- “ And Desolation stalking in the rear,
- “ Revenge, by Justice guided, with his train,
- “ Shall drive impetuous o’er the trembling plain.”*

* Altered from Churchill.